

Message Text

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TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SCUL, SF, US

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN TOUR OF U.S. GYMNASTS POSTPONED

REF: DAKAR 4638, ADDIS ABABA 8835, PRETORIA 3262

1. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE U.S. GYMNASTICS FEDERATION, FRANK BARE, HAS INFORMED DEPARTMENT THAT DUE TO DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING SUITABLE ATHLETES AND COACHES, PROJECTED VISIT OF A GROUP OF SIX AMERICAN WOMEN GYMNASTS TO SOUTH AFRICA WOULD HAVE TO BE POSTPONED UNTIL AN UNSPECIFIED DATE. BARE SAID PROBLEMS WERE ESSENTIALLY UNRELATED TO PUBLICITY SURROUNDING PLANNED VISIT.

2. SINCE THIS VISIT MAY EVENTUALLY TAKE PLACE AND IN LIGHT OF THE STRONG AFRICAN REACTION TO THE VISIT OF THE NEW

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ZEALAND NATIONAL RUGBY TEAM TO SOUTH AFRICA, THE FOLLOWING

BACKGROUND MAY BE USEFUL. TEAM IS IN NO SENSE A 'NATIONAL TEAM' OR THE U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM (NONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS WHO HAD BEEN EXPECTED TO MAKE THE TRIP EARLIER, ACCORDING TO BARE, PARTICIPATED IN THE MONTREAL OLYMPICS). THE VISIT WILL BE COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND NO US GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE WILL BE INVOLVED. WE WILL CONTINUE TO ABIDE BY OUR LONG-STANDING HANDS-OFF POLICY IN REGARD TO UNOFFICIAL SPORTS VISITS OF THIS SORT.

3. GYMNASTIC TEAMS FROM THE U.S. HAVE VISITED SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH REMAINS A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL GYMNASTICS FEDERATION, FOR PAST SIX YEARS. LAST YEAR'S TEAM INCLUDED A BLACK GYMNAST. KISSINGER

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